

A
BRIEF AND CLEAR CONFESSION
AND
SCRIPTURAL DEMONSTRATION,

FIRST,
OF THE INCARNATION OF OUR BELOVED LORD JESUS CHRIST.

SECONDLY,
HOW BOTH THE TEACHERS AND THE CHURCH OF CHRIST SHOULD BE
MINDED ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES.

WRITTEN TO

John A'Lasco and his Fellow-laborers at Emden.

A. D., 1544.

BY

MENNO SIMON.

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," Jn. 8 : 31, 32.

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,"
1 Cor. 3 : 11.

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P R E F A C E.

Menno Simon wishes the learned John A'Lasco and his fellows, and to all the people of East Friesland, of whatever class or condition in life they be, true faith, true light and knowledge, the Holy Spirit, the lovely fear and pure love of the Lord, an unblamable life and the eternal life of God our heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, his beloved Son, our Lord, who has loved us and washed us in his blood. To him be the glory, honor, praise, kingdom, power and majesty for ever and ever, Amen.

BELoved friends and brethren, as I, in the latter part of the first month of the year 1543, met you at Emden to discuss with you forthree or four days, the disputed articles of our faith and religion, for which purpose I was invited to come, by writing; first, the incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, to which, you well know, you forced me against my will; secondly, infant baptism. Not agreeing in this, you let me depart in peace at our separation, desiring however, that I should send to you, by U. L., the foundation of my faith, which I had compiled in writing, inside of a stipulated period, which was three months, so that you might thus show to your god-called rulers, our faith, diligence, desire, seeking and life (which, however, is very weak); upon what foundation, Scriptures and reasons our intended doctrine, faith and life was founded. I hope and trust, by the grace of the Lord, that you have desired and required this of me without any malice or bad intention.

Therefore I have promised to fulfill your kind bidding and desire, rejoiced in spirit; because also through U. L., our faith, doctrine and life could be best explained to those of high, social standing, to whose care the carnal sword was entrusted, and thus the suspicion be destroyed which is held against us by the pernicious uproar and shameful doctrine and practice of the false

prophets, who, under a holy semblance, ever creep into society to the hindrance of the wise and intelligent; as before God, who knows our hearts, we are certainly clear of all their abominable doctrine, uproar, mutiny, bloodshed, polygamy and the like abominations. Yea, we hate, and with sincere affection fight against them as acknowledged heresy; as snares to the conscience; as deceit, seduction and fraud, and as pestilential doctrine, accursed by all divine Scripture. For how should the true brethren and sisters of Jesus Christ, the well-disposed children of God, who, with Christ Jesus, are born of God the Father, and the powerful seed of the divine word in Christ Jesus; regenerated by Christ, partake of his Spirit and nature, conform unto him, are christian and heavenly minded, teach rebellion of any kind? inasmuch as they are ever prepared, according to the measure of their faith, to do the will of the eternal Prince of peace, who has taught his disciples nothing but patience and eternal peace, saying, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," Jn. 14 : 27. Again, "Peace be with you." For his kingdom is a kingdom of love, of unity, of peace, and of reformation; and not of hatred, rebellion, blood, disquiet and destruction. Again, In peace we are called of God; peace should rule in our hearts to him by whom we are called. Again, Blessed are the peace-makers. Paul says,

"The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing," Rom. 15 : 13. I am aware, kind reader, that the cited Scriptures have, for the most part, reference to the inward peace, which comes through Christ; yet, whoever has this inward, christian peace in his heart will nevermore be found guilty, before God and the world, of rebellion, treason, mutiny, murder, robbery or such unbecoming acts. For the Spirit of Christ which is in him seeks no evil, but good; no destruction, but healing; no corruption, but assistance; seeks to live everywhere in peace with all mankind, as far as possible. He follows "peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man can see the Lord," Heb. 12: 14; Jn. 14: 17; 21: 15; Rom. 14: 19; 1 Cor. 7: 15; Col. 3: 15; Matt. 5: 9; Rom. 15: 13.

Behold, beloved friends and brethren, by these and other Scriptures we are taught and warned not to take up the literal sword, nor ever to give our consent thereto, *Excepto ordinario potestatis gladio, indebitum usum verso*; but to take up the two-edged, powerful, sharp sword of the Spirit, which goes forth from the mouth of the Lord, namely, the word of God. By this we intend to destroy the kingdom of satan, constrain all the world to regeneration and salvation and bruise, crush and pierce all petrified and obdurate hearts. Desiring, I say, by the grace, Spirit and power of the Lord, therewith to circumcise all flesh, high, low, rich, poor, learned or unlearned, of all pride, vain show, pomp, avarice, usury, smuggling, lies, deceit, robbery, shedding of innocent blood, hatred, envy, adultery, fornication, unchastity, unnatural desires, gluttony, wine-bibbing, drunkenness, debauchery, cursing and swearing, blindness, vanity, and of the fearful, unbecoming idolatry; that all of them, no matter who they be, by the pure fear of the Lord, of whom comes the sure knowledge of the judgment of God, become first inwardly humble before him, and then, by the sure knowledge of his blessings, so abundantly shown to us, be refreshed and consoled by Christ Jesus, and thus willingly renounce, by the power of their faith, working by love, their own wisdom, intelligence, philosophy, sophistry, unwillingness, sloth, evil lusts, unbelief,

disobedience and the very erroneous, carnal, mad life of this world, and enter into all divine wisdom, truth, love, zeal and soberness; the true sacraments and true religion, in full obedience to God and Christ and in all the christian fruits which flow from a pure heart, good conscience and unfeigned faith, Tit. 2: 7; 1 Pet. 1: 23; Eph. 6: 7; Heb. 4: 12; Rev. 1: 16; 19: 15.

Thus we do not contend with carnal, but with spiritual weapons, patience and with the word of the Lord, against all flesh, world and devil, trusting in Christ. Nor shall there ever be found other weapons with us. Therefore, be not afraid of us (behold, in Christ Jesus I lie not); for we do not desire your destruction, but your regeneration; not your condemnation, but your everlasting salvation; not your flesh and blood, but your spirit and soul; on account of which I have these seven years suffered and yet suffer slander and scorn, anxiety, suspension, persecution, and great peril of being imprisoned.

The more the word of the Lord is extended, by the grace of God, to the reformation of some persons, who, however, are few, the more hatred and bitterness increases against me; so that up to this hour I could not find, in all the country, where, alas, the mere boasting of the divine word is a great deal more plenty than the fear of God, a cabin, or hut (blessed be the Lord) in which my wife and little children can safely sojourn for a year or two. O, cruel, unmerciful christians! O, that all magistrates and princes, as also all the wise and learned knew the seeking, intention and desire of my heart, as also of my beloved brethren who, by the grace, Spirit and word of God, are converted into a new spirit or new birth! If they rightly understood our teaching how soon their hearts and minds would be changed into a different sense! But as all of them, with but few exceptions, are nothing but earth and flesh and not gifted with the Spirit of Christ; therefore, alas, we hear nothing from them but upbraiding and slander, can expect nothing from them (I mean the evil-disposed) but the stake, water, fire, wheel and sword, as a reward of gratitude, that we have sought and yet seek our conversion, salvation and eternal life,

and that of the whole world, with such diligence, solicitude, pains and labor from our inmost heart. For I strive after nothing, of which God is my witness, but that the God of heaven and of earth, through his blessed Son, Jesus Christ may have the glory and praise of his blessed word; that all men may be saved; and that they may awaken in this convenient time of grace, from their profound sleep of sinfulness; that they may lay by all adhering sin and the damnable works of darkness; that they may put on the armor of light, that they may thus become, with us by true penance, faith, baptism, Supper, ban or separation, love, obedience and true life, one holy, christian church and body in Christ Jesus. Something which the whole world to-day yet opposes with all its strength with both shoulders and horns; not being willing that Christ Jesus, forever blessed, shall reign over them. Yea, they persecute, banish, burn, murder, and destroy all those who willingly teach and uphold the glory, praise, honor, will and commandments of the Lord. *De his satis*, Heb. 12: 15; Rom. 13: 11; Heb. 12: 2; Rom. 13: 12; Luke 3: 3; Matt. 3: 1; 28: 19; Mark 16: 15; Acts 2; Matt. 18: 17; 1 Cor. 5: 5; 2 Thess. 3; 1 Tim. 1: 20; Luke 19: 47.

Inasmuch as I do your kind bidding in this matter by briefly compiling in writing my doctrine, faith and seeking, as I did before, verbally, which I am ever prepared to do to all mankind, according to the doctrine of Peter, as was said above, therefore I desire of you, so dear as Christ is to you, that you do not look upon this my confession, which is the word of God, with carnal, blind eyes, as the mad, unintelligent world do who want to have all things taught according to their own fancy and will, under the name of christianity; that you will not measure and judge according to the carnal way, as with logical questions and other like human wisdom; but that you will look at and judge it according to the word and truth of the Lord, as those would who understand spiritual matters, as unblamable, regenerated christians who are full of the knowledge, love and fear of God; are urged by the Holy Spirit, and do not seek human favor, praise and honor, self and

carnal welfare, but alone the honor and glory of God, and the eternal salvation of their brethren. For such, alone, can judge of spiritual matters; and not the carnal minded, 1 Cor. 14: 29. The Spirit of God teaches, judges and understands all things. Paul says, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God," 1 Cor. 2: 11. Therefore try your intention and the inmost of your hearts, as if before God who seeth all things. Search yourselves thoroughly and open your hearts before the Lord. In case you yet seek any carnal liberty, lusts, honor and profit, then, doubtlessly, your judgment in spiritual matters (especially as regards the mere confession) will be quite carnal, selfish, partial, unjust and false; you will also garble and pervert the plain testimony of the Holy Scriptures, by logic and false reasoning, to free yourselves and to please the world. Beware, lest you do so, and thus the terrible wrath of the Lord come upon you. I know why I write this. I am in doubt about your sincerity. Remember what I mean. And if your hearts be sincere, clean and pious before God, as I hope; and if you actually are desirous of the truth, then you will confess, by the grace of God, that our humble, plain doctrine, faith, sacraments, and the life of nearly all, particularly the outward, unblamable, christian, evangelical life, is conformable to the Spirit and word of God.

And if God, by his loving kindness, should grant that you sincerely acknowledge it in your inmost soul as being the unchangeable word and will of God, even as the Spirit and power of God; then I pray you by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ to receive it in gladness and gratitude of heart and let it be examined by your ordained rulers and by all men and let them know what your heart, spirit or conscience testifies concerning our doctrine, faith, sacraments and lives. Fear not the exalted position of any man, nor despise his humbleness. Go upon the king-ly highway speaking the truth to all mankind, with a clear conscience, lest you teach, judge or testify contrary to your inward understanding, judgment and conviction,

to your everlasting condemnation. For you are certainly taught by the word of the Lord that whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come, Matt. 12: 32; Luke 10: 12; Mark 3: 28. Therefore, most beloved, search your spirits. If you be spiritual then your judgment, doubtlessly, will be spiritual, just and right. If you be not, and judge spiritual matters according to your own will, woe unto you! I speak to you as to one whose soul I seek and love with all my strength. Although you are more learned than I am, yet I teach and admonish you to judge justly in all things, without carnality or partiality. For I am afraid that there were not a few, part of whom were also famous men, excelling in learning, who, in semblance of fearing God, for the sake of shameful gain, worldly honor and carnal lusts have shamefully written, judged and taught the blessed word of the Lord by garbling the Scriptures, against their own consciences, to the despising of the cross of Christ, in order to please those who are in authority.

Be this as it may, let every soul seek the pure, christian truth, in purity of heart; and strive after the same with all diligence,

and he will be successful. Jesus says, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," again, those who trust in him, shall understand the truth, and the believing in love shall be agreeable unto him. Again, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant," Jn. 8: 31, 32; Ps. 25: 14.

May the Almighty Father, through his blessed son Jesus Christ, give you all, in all things, a true understanding and clear vision to judge rightly in all things, to distinguish rightly between that which is holy and that which is unholy; between good and evil; right and wrong, and between the clean and unclean, according to the evangelical truth; that all those of you who have renounced gain, honor and fame, for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ, may, henceforth, be taught by the sure and true confession of Scripture, be impelled by the Holy Ghost, and enter into all divine wisdom, truth, righteousness and obedience to him who has taught us by his powerful word, drawn us by his Spirit and bought and delivered us by his precious blood, that is, Christ Jesus, Amen.

Judge aright, and confess the truth.



A TRUE CONFESSION

AND

SCRIPTURAL DEMONSTRATION OF THE MOST HOLY INCARNATION OF OUR
BELOVED LORD JESUS CHRIST. WRITTEN TO JOHN A'LASCO
AND HIS FELLOW-LABORERS AT EMDEN.

BELOVED LORDS, friends and brethren, when this matter of the incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ was first mentioned by the brethren, on hearing it I was terrified at heart, lest I should err in the matter and be found, before God, in pernicious unbelief. On account of this article I was often so troubled at heart, after receiving baptism, that for many days I abstained from food and drink, by the over-anxiety of my soul, beseeching and praying God in extreme necessity that the kind Father by his mercy and grace would disclose unto me, poor sinner, who, although in extreme weakness, desired to do his blessed will and pleasure, the mystery of the incarnation of his blessed Son, to the extent necessary to the glorification of his holy name and to the consolation of my afflicted conscience.

Thus wandering about for days, weeks and months, I have frequently asked the opinion or belief of some of you in regard to this matter which bore so heavily upon my heart. Yet none could instruct me sufficiently to quiet my conscience. For gross misunderstanding of some Scriptures which they alleged as proof of their assertion, I found with them, not only according to my opinion, but according to the meaning of the Scriptures; so that, at last, after much fasting, weeping, praying, tribulation and anxiety, I became, by the grace of God, quiet and refreshed at heart, firmly acknowledging and believing, assured by the infallibly sure testimony of the Scriptures, understood in the Spirit, that Christ Jesus forever blessed, is the Lord from heaven, 1 Cor. 15:47; the promised spiritual seed

of the new and spiritual Eve, Gen. 3:15, namely, the eternal Truth, Jn. 14:16; the powerful Conqueror of the serpent and his seed, Gen. 3:15; Luke 11:21; Jn. 16:33; Heb. 2:14; which promised seed is the eternal Truth and word of God, and, in the fullness of time, was sent forth from the Almighty and merciful Father, Gal. 4:4, in a pure virgin, Mary, Isa. 7:14, conceived by the Holy Ghost and power of the Most High. She heard and believed the heavenly message and pleasure of the Father, that was brought to her by Gabriel, Luke 1:28; this eternal Word of God is become flesh: it was in the beginning with God and was God, Jn. 1:2. Conceived and begotten of the Holy Ghost, Matt. 1:18; generated and nourished in Mary, as a natural child is by its mother; a true Son of God and a true son of man, born of her, truly flesh and blood, suffering, hungry, thirsty, passive, mortal according to the flesh; immortal according to the Spirit, like unto us in all things, yet without sin, Heb. 2:9; 4:15. Truly God and man, man and God. Not divided nor separated as being half heavenly and half earthly, half of the seed of man and half of God, as some express it; but an unmixed, whole Christ, namely, spirit, soul and body, as Paul says, all men are, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself," (mark, *humbled himself*), Phil. 2:6-8. He who was more exalted than the angels, is made a little lower than they are. For as he was subject to

death, he became flesh and blood, Heb. 2: 9.

I believe and confess without a doubt that he was thus, according to the flesh, conceived and come of the Holy Ghost, born of the seed or lineage of David and of Abraham, and made of a woman, under the law, Gal. 4: 4, circumcised the eighth day, obedient unto his parents, growing and waxing strong in Spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him, Luke 2: 40.

This same man, Christ Jesus, preached, was crucified, died, was buried, arose, and ascended to heaven and is there seated at the right hand of his Almighty Father, according to the testimony of all the Scriptures, and from thence he will return to judge the sheep and the goats, the good and the evil, the quick and the dead, 2 Cor. 5: 10; 2 Tim. 4: 1.

Thus I believe and confess that the pure word of God, Christ Jesus, the Creator, Commander and accuser of Adam, instituted himself in Adam's stead, that is, in his wrath, death and curse, and has, by his great compassion, love and mercy, taken upon himself the accursed burden of his erring creatures; that he himself became like Adam in the flesh. And thus he has, by his death, again given life; and by humbling himself, by his righteousness and obedience, he has reunited and fulfilled the eternal righteousness of the righteous God, as he speaks through David, "I restored that which I took not away," Ps. 69: 4.

God has not reconciled the world unto himself by Adam's flesh, for by his righteousness it was subject to the wrath and curse. And what can be reconciled by wrath and curse? But he has done so by himself, by mere grace, by his eternal Word, that is, by his blessed Son, who became like unto the first Adam in all things except in unrighteousness, disobedience and sin, that all honor and praise should belong to God and not to us or to Adam. Yea, "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption, that, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord," 1 Cor. 1: 30, 31.

Behold, beloved lords, friends and brethren, thus I believe that God has sent "His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and

for sin (which he conquered, or for which he was offered), condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. 8: 3, 4. Again, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. 5: 21. And thus he is become our only offer and sacrifice, fulfillment and requisition, by whom God, the Father is reconciled, by whom his righteousness is fulfilled, the malediction removed, the devil, sin and everlasting death conquered and eternal life restored, yea, grace, favor, mercy, peace and eternal life. Paul says, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8: 32.

Thus I believe and confess that "God was made manifest in the flesh," 1 Tim. 3: 16; "That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," 2 Cor. 5: 19; that he has blotted out our sins, and has again seated himself at the right hand of the Majesty on high; and all the angels of God worship him there, Heb. 1: 6. And with this doctrine of the conception and incarnation of Christ, all scriptural testimony and truth agree.

First, Paul says, "What is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things," Eph. 4: 9, 10. Again, Christ himself says, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Again, "He that cometh from above, is above all; he that is of the earth, is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven, is above all, and what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony," Jn. 3: 31, 32. Again, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world," "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" Jn. 6: 51, 61, 62. Again, "I came forth from the Fa-

ther, and am come unto the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father," Jn. 16: 28. Again, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world," Jn. 17: 24. Again, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the word of Life (for the life was manifested)," 1 Jn. 1: 1; and also many other Scriptures, particularly of John.

All those who, by the grace of God, clearly and intelligently see into and confess this doctrine of the incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, will rightly confess and comprehend the unspeakable grace, favor, compassion, mercy, and the inexpressibly great love of God the Father expressed and manifested in Christ Jesus, as he himself says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life," Jn. 3: 16. Again, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," 1 Jn. 4: 9, 10. For how could God show greater paternal love to us than so to humble his eternal Wisdom and Truth, his pure, powerful Word, his blessed Son, by whom he created all things; who was like unto him in form, the image of his blessed being, that he became less than the angels, a poor, despised, passive, mortal man or servant, who alone had to bear the trouble, labor, transgression, curse and death of the whole world. He so humbled him that he became the most miserable of men, 1 Pet. 2: 24; Isa. 53: 6, "a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people," Ps. 22: 6; and thus the innocent, the true, the wise, the righteous, the obedient and the pure Christ Jesus had to wash off, blot out, and satisfy the guilt, falsehood, foolishness, unrighteousness, disobedience and uncleanness of all men. Say, beloved, who ever heard of greater love?

Beloved, holy father and brother, this is, before God, my doctrine, faith and confession of the consoling incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, which is, in my opinion, very strong and incontrovertible by the Holy Scriptures; nor can I, therefore, be convinced by any view of the matter, by any of your reasonings and writings hitherto advanced by you against our doctrine, faith and confession; as you turn and explain them according to a natural and carnal sense, and not to the true explanation and sense of the Holy Spirit; which, doubtlessly, should not be the case in this matter, since this glorious work of the incarnation of Christ is wrought and accomplished by God through his Holy Spirit, above all natural causes solely in faith, as the pleasure of God directs.

I repeat, this is my confession to those who desired to hear my belief and feeling in regard to this article. Yet, I never teach it so profoundly in my common admonitions to the brethren and friends; nor have I, heretofore, ever taught it thus profoundly, as I have told you verbally. But I simply teach that the blessed Christ Jesus is truly God and man, a Son of God, and a son of man, conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, a poor, despised man, like unto us in all things, except sin; that it is he who was promised in the law by the prophets, and is our true Messiah, Christ, King, David, Prophet, Bishop and Priest, the Deliverer, Savior, Sacrifice, Reconciliation, Fulfiller, Shepherd, Teacher, Example, Mediator, Advocate, Ruler, Commander, Bridegroom, Light of the world, the true Door to the fold, the eternal Wisdom, the image of God, the Father's Word, the right Way, Truth and Life, &c. For I know full well that there are few who can understand this particular matter, even after it is explained to them. Therefore, I say, I deem it unnecessary for me and for all teachers to teach this matter of the incarnation of Christ further than, simply, to the teaching of the regeneration of the church, to love, to consolation, to the sanctification and to live and act according to his holy doctrine and life. Would to God that we were all of such a mind. But in case one wants to search further and inquire into

this matter, if meet to know and his understanding reaches far enough, it will not be hidden from him; if not it will be said unto him, *A litora te ne quaefieris*, Eccl. 3: 21.

Well, as this is our doctrine and understanding, not otherwise than according to the testimony of the Scriptures, as we can by the grace of God, best understand and comprehend it, we yet fear that our explanation from the word of God will not satisfy and convince you to unite with us in this matter, but that you will persevere in your adopted reasonings and arguments and try to explain it literally, naturally and humanlike; not observing that Isaiah, Matthew, Luke and John clearly testify that it was brought about by faith in Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as was said above.

O, let us not humble the Almighty Father in his mercy! Let us not rob the blessed Son of God of his glory. Beloved brethren the Scripture remains eternal and unbroken. Take heed, lest you err. Thus speaks Isaiah, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son," Isa. 7: 14. Again, the angel of the Lord said unto Joseph, "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost," Matt. 1: 20. Again, when Mary asked the angel the manner of the conception, how it shall be, he answered: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee," Luke 1: 35. Again, this is the sure testimony of John the servant of God and of Christ, concerning the incarnation of Jesus Christ. "The word was made flesh," Jn. 1: 14. He does not say, *The word took unto itself flesh*.

Behold, dear brethren, however incontrovertible these reasons and Scriptures be by which we try to establish our assertion, yet I fear that we, on account of this article, will be judged and considered as being sectarian, heretical and deceitful, notwithstanding there may be many among us who fear the Lord from their inmost hearts, who never in their lives, heard a word spoken in regard to the mystery of this matter as previously expressed with great clearness; nor ever inquired into it, besides they neither knew nor understood anything about it; but they are satisfied with the Father's fa-

vor through Christ; obey his holy word, follow his example, love, doctrine and life, and are rejoiced, solely, at the remission of sins, freedom of the Spirit, grace, favor, promise, mercy and eternal life, which they have received through him. O, that all the wise and learned, even all the men of this world would satisfy themselves with the plain, humble teaching of Jesus Christ and his apostles, not climbing higher nor remaining lower; would seek God, with purity of heart—and firmly believe, fear, love and obey his blessed word. O, what precious talents and what glorious gain would then, by the grace of God, be gathered into the treasury of the Lord. But, as it is, there are many, alas, whose faith and knowledge is not in their hearts but solely upon their lips and tongues, *non loquor ad erubescendum proborum*, who find pleasure in foolish and useless questions and in disputation; who are versed more in the wisdom of man than in the wisdom of God; who are of broken minds, who ever learn and never come to the true knowledge of the eternal truth; and who ever contradict and reprove them by the plain word of the holy gospel of Jesus Christ, out of mere brotherly love, is from that moment considered by them as being a shameful sectarian or a wicked perverse heretic; *Ipsi judicate, an ne verum sit quod dico?* notwithstanding that their own unbelieving hearts are quite earthly, carnal, and devilish and their whole life nothing but mere flesh, pride, vanity, laziness, unchristianlike avarice, hatred, cruelty, blood-thirstiness, drunkenness, flattery, in short, nothing but sin and shame. O, might it be that I lie and do not tell the truth!

Nevertheless let them slander and upbraid as much as they please; we will willingly bear it. We will all be judged by one Judge who will scrupulously try and reward their doctrine, faith, zeal, seeking and life, as well as ours. Then it will appear who have anxiously sought the everlasting truth of God, the praise and honor of the Lord, and the everlasting salvation of all mankind. Brethren, beware, lest you become like these fruitless disputers. Take heed, if you would save your souls, that you sincerely seek, desire, believe, receive, and live according to the saving truth of God, Amen.

OBJECTIONS.

As I have shown and confessed to you the firm foundation of the incarnation of the Lord, that he did not become flesh of Mary, but that he became flesh in Mary; and as I have also, in part, adduced the reasons and Scriptures by which we are forced to such belief therefore I will now briefly reply to your Scriptures and arguments, hitherto advanced, by which you teach and undertake to prove that he did not simply become flesh in Mary but of Mary.

First, you ask, "If he is not the seed of woman?" We answer, Yes, Gen. 3: 15.

From this you conclude that if he is the seed of woman, he is also man born of woman. We answer by asking, had not the deceiving serpent a body? You must answer, Yes. For God said, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." Again, Was not the deceived woman corporeal? Doubtlessly so. If the natural and corporeal seed of the deceived woman be bodily, then the seed of the serpent must also be a natural, bodily seed, of which God himself has spoken and testified in Genesis. Or else you must admit and confess that the one should be understood spiritually and the other literally. Not at all, beloved brethren. But the bodily serpent represents the spiritual serpent, namely Satan, Rev. 12: 14, and has his spiritual seed, which is falsehood, Jn. 8: 44. Thus also, the woman, who is the mother of all mankind, a like image of Adam, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; subject to her husband, after she had sinned—the image of the new spiritual bride, namely, of the church of Christ, which is the image of Christ, Rom. 8: 29, flesh of Christ's flesh and bone of his bone, subject to Christ, Eph. 5: 30. If the bride be spiritual then the seed must be spiritual, namely, the eternal truth, which truth is Christ himself, Jn. 14: 6. Behold, most beloved, thus the serpent is spiritual and his seed is spiritual of which he begets all his children of accursed falsehood. On the contrary, the bride is spiritual and her

seed is spiritual, of which she begets all her children of the saving truth. Between these is constant opposition, as may be plainly seen. Yet truth triumphs, and falsehood is vanquished, notwithstanding falsehood opposes with all its power. O, brethren, do understand the Scriptures aright, lest we, through misunderstanding or pernicious obduracy, deceive ourselves and with us many souls. If you be not satisfied with the clear explanation of these Scriptures, but still maintain that both the woman and the seed must be corporeal, then we know and confess that this same woman conceived in her womb the beforementioned seed, which is God's word, Jn. 1: 1; not from her body nor of her body, but of God, by the power of the Holy Ghost, Matt. 1: 18, through faith, Luke 1: 34.

Secondly, You ask, *If he is not called the seed of Abraham?* We answer: Yes, Gal. 3: 16. From this you conclude that he must, according to the flesh, be descended from the flesh and blood of Abraham. In confirmation you cite the saying of Paul, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham; wherefore in all things it behooved him to be named like unto his brethren," Heb. 2: 16, 17. To this in the first place we reply, That your conclusion is according to the flesh and not with the word of God. John says, "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" and it is of the Holy Ghost, Matt. 1: 25; therefore it was not Abraham's natural flesh and blood. But by grace it was promised the beloved father Abraham, that he, that is, the true blessing of all nations, should not come of the seed of his brethren, nor of the gentiles nor uncircumcised, but of his seed, that is, of his generation, as it is written, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," Gen. 12: 3. Thus is Christ Jesus promised, to Abraham and born of his seed, according to the promise, as Christ himself says, that "salvation is of the Jews," Jn. 4: 22, and thus he is called the seed and son of Abraham, Gal. 3: 16; Matt. 1: 1. For he

is, doubtlessly, according to his blessed flesh which is conceived of the Holy Ghost of Abraham's seed, come and born for the salvation of us all.

Again, the saying of Paul which you allege to sustain your cause was not taught and spoken by the Holy Ghost in such a sense as you claim; but Paul says, "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one (that is, you say, "of one Adam." But we say they are of one, that is, of one God), for which cause he (the Savior) is not ashamed to call them (the sanctified) brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee," Heb. 2: 11, 12. For as Christ Jesus was born from above of the Father and is therefore called God's child or Son, having God as Father, thus, also, all who receive Christ "to them gave he power to become the sons of God," Jn. 1: 12. Such also have God as their Father. As the regenerated are born, together with Christ Jesus, of one God, and have one Father, therefore he calls the sanctified who, with him, are born of God, his brethren, not because of the flesh but because of the new birth. If it were otherwise you would have to consent and admit that all wicked, unbelieving and perverse men and women were brethren and sisters of Christ Jesus as well as the believing, sincere and pious ones. Not so, for Christ Jesus says, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister, and mother, Matt. 12: 50. Read and understand it rightly. Further, Paul says, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me," Heb. 2: 13. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself partook of the same (that is, mortal, as a consequence); that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage, which was the seed and generation of Abraham, and, by the terrible threat, subject to the heavy burden and intolerable yoke of the law of Moses. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; if you understand it as meaning the good, then you should know that they did

not sin; but if you take it as meaning the evil ones, then you should know that he rejected them and keeps them in the bondage of eternal darkness unto the great judgment day. Therefore Paul says, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren (to wit: weak and mortal), that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted," Heb. 2: 16—18. Now, judge for yourselves whether this is not the right meaning of this Scripture of Paul. In the third place you declare and say thus: *Paul plainly teaches that Christ Jesus is born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and is proven to be the Son of God, with power; according to the spirit of sanctification.* Therefore he is, you conclude, according to the flesh, of the seed or loins of David, and according to the Spirit, alone, born of God.

To which we reply: It is true that it would follow in the common course of nature that Christ was born of the seed or loins of David; but it is not in accordance with the testimony of Scripture. The reason is this: Because the Scripture teaches that the "Word was made flesh," and that it came forth from the Holy Ghost, Jn. 1: 14; Matt. 1: 20; Rom. 1: 2. Therefore, beloved brethren this is the true meaning of Paul in regard to this and like Scriptures; the consoling promise of the future Savior was given to Abraham; that he should be born of his seed or generation. Abraham's offspring were, Ishmael, Isaac, and the children of Keturah. The promise of the patriarch was again given to Isaac, and not to the others. Isaac begat Esau and Jacob. Not Esau, but Jacob again received the promise given to his father Abraham and Isaac. Jacob multiplied into twelve tribes; and, that the promised Savior might not be looked for from the tribe of Reuben, Dan, Gad, or any of the eleven tribes, therefore the Holy Ghost points to Judah and not to any of the other tribes, Gen. 49: 10. Judah, multiplying into many branches, the prom-

ise is renewed in David, 2 Kin. 7: 12. Thus the merciful Father has ever testified and shown beforehand, from one patriarch to another and from one generation to another, that all men might know from which patriarchs and generations the promised Savior and Deliverer of all mankind should be born, according to the flesh, as the Jews well knew by such showing of Scripture, saying, "Hath not the Scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem," Jn. 7: 42. "He came unto his own and his own received him not." He is come of the seed or generation of David, according to the promise; but they did not receive him. Yea, the appointed hour is come. Gabriel was sent of God to a virgin named Mary who was promised to a man. [Mary believed the word of the Lord; the Holy Ghost overshadowed her, &c. The Word, in her, became flesh, Jn. 1: 14. It is conceived and brought forth of the Holy Ghost, Matt. 1: 20; and according to this same flesh, or with this same flesh, which was conceived of and brought forth of the Holy Ghost, he is born of Mary, the pure virgin, who was of the seed and generation of David; David was of Judah; Judah of Jacob; Jacob of Isaac; Isaac of Abraham; and thus the divine promise was fulfilled, which God through grace alone had promised and given to the abovementioned patriarchs; and thus was born, according to the flesh, as was said above, of the seed or generation of David; and by his saving Spirit is proven to be the living Son of God, Rom. 1: 4. For if he were to prove or declare himself to be the Son of God, it must, without doubt, be according to his sanctifying Spirit, inasmuch as he could not be such according to the flesh, as he had humbled himself, and was forsaken of the Father, was weak, despised, hungry, thirsty, passive, mortal, and like unto us in all things, yet without sin. Beloved brethren, take heed. The alleged Scripture of Paul is very clear, and has every where a scruple, Rom. 1: 13.

In the fourth place, you say, Christ is called a fruit of the loins of David. Therefore he must be the natural and pleasing seed of David.

Answer. These words, according to the letter were spoken of Solomon and not of

Christ; which Solomon was naturally born of the loins of David. Thus Nathan spoke unto David, "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish thy kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son (now note of whom it is spoken). If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men," 2 Sam. 7: 12—14. Now, Christ never committed iniquity; for he knew not sin; neither was guile found in his mouth, 1 Pet. 2: 22. Again, in the Psalms, "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set up on thy throne. If thy children will keep my covenant, and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for ever more," Ps. 132: 11, 12. That this is literally spoken of Solomon, he himself testifies in plain words, 1 Kin. 3: 6; 8: 20; which Solomon, without doubt, represented in figure, Christ Jesus, as in his glory, wisdom, building of the temple, &c. Behold, most beloved, thus we should not take the letter for the spirit and the spirit for the letter. But that the promise according to the Spirit had reference to Christ, is incontrovertible; for this the holy prophets of God plainly show; and particularly, Isa. 9: 6; Jer. 23: 5; 33: 15.

In the fifth place you ask, If he is not a fruit of the womb of Mary?

Answer. Yes, Luke 1: 38. From this you conclude,

If he be a fruit of the womb of Mary then he is also brought forth of her flesh and blood by the power of the Holy Ghost. For if he were not of her flesh and blood then he could not be called a fruit of her womb. But because he is of her flesh he is called the fruit of her body, as an apple is called the fruit of a tree, because it grows upon the tree, and partakes of its nature, through the strength of the earth.

Answer. According to the course of nature your conclusion is in part right, but according to scriptural testimony quite wrong. For the Scriptures say, that Mary, the pure virgin, by faith, conceived the eternal word of God which in the beginning was with God, and was God, that it became

flesh, Jn. 1: 14; conceived and brought forth of the Holy Spirit, Matt. 1: 20; that it was human and natural-like; nourished in her; and was in due time born as a natural child is born of its mother. Thus Christ Jesus remains the precious, blessed fruit of the womb of Mary, according to the words of Elizabeth, which was conceived not *of* her womb but *in* her womb wrought by the Holy Spirit through faith, of God the omnipotent Father, from high heaven, as we have frequently shown.

You allege a natural reason concerning the tree and its fruits in proof of your assertion. Inasmuch as you do so, I will reply to your reasoning according to nature, namely, I have a well prepared field, well pulverized and manured, bearing abundance of wheat, corn, or rye. I say, ah, that is a beautiful crop, which fruit this field could not produce of itself, however well-tilled and rich the same was, and however much it was induced to do so by the heat of the sun and the moisture of the atmosphere, until the seed was sown in by the sower. Being sown, and grown up it is called the fruit of the field, notwithstanding it was first sown thereon. An apple is called the fruit of the tree, although it is produced and grown by the soil on which the tree is grown.

In the same manner the heavenly seed, namely, the word of God, was sown in Mary, and by her faith, being conceived in her by the Holy Ghost, became flesh; and thus it is called the fruit of her womb, the same as a natural fruit or offspring is called the fruit of its natural mother, Jn. 1: 14. For Christ Jesus, of his origin, is no earthly man, that is, a fruit of the flesh and blood of Adam; but he is a heavenly fruit or man. For his beginning or origin is of the Father, Jn. 16: 28, like unto the first Adam, yet without sin. Given to Adam and his children, in case they hear and receive him in his holy word, to their everlasting salvation and deliverance, of God the merciful Father alone through grace and mercy; without price and without any previous mention on our part.

In the sixth place you say, God could not suffer. If Christ's flesh were not of earth or of Adam, but from heaven, then he could not have been passive, and consequently he could not have died.

Answer. Be impartial and judge rightly. Your meaning is, that Christ Jesus according to the Spirit alone, is of the Father, in which Spirit he was impassive and immortal, as you say, but that he was not of the Father according to the flesh. But according to the flesh, in which he suffered and died, you teach that he is of earth, that thus the law (wherewith earthly man was cursed on account of his disobedience) concerning the earthly man, namely Christ, might be fulfilled, that he by obedience might save, and we in him, by the communion of his human nature and blood, whereby he has fulfilled the righteousness of the Father in our flesh. This foundation is implied in your Latin syllogisms. We will not controvert this by subtle syllogisms nor by acute human cavilings, for we do not have them; but we controvert it by the plain testimony of the word alone, which cannot be turned by flatterings, nor broken by human reason.

First, we confess and consent before all the world that God, the Almighty, eternal Father is quite impassive and immortal; for with him there is no change, Jas. 1: 17. *Ego Deus, inquit Propheta, &c., non mutor.* But God, the Son, the eternal Word is humbled, has denied himself, became less than the angels, miserable, mortal flesh or man, Jn. 1: 14.

You say, God cannot suffer; but the Scripture says otherwise, that God, the Son, has suffered, for he himself says, I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Rev. 1: 18; 22: 13. Adam's flesh was not the first and the last; but he who was before every creature, by whom all things were created, Eph. 3: 9. Whose goings forth were from the beginning and from eternity. This is the first and the last; this same one is become flesh; he has suffered, he died, he again became living and shall live forever. Take heed, lest you willfully oppose the Scriptures. Christ can not be divided into two parts, as you think.

I repeat, the Father is impassive, immortal and unchangeable; but for our sakes the Son is humbled, became passive and mortal, according to the testimony of the Scriptures, Phil. 2: 7; Heb. 2: 14; 1 Pet. 1: 19, and many other Scriptures. Therefore he

prayed his beloved Father that he might again acquire the glory that he had with the Father, which he had lost in becoming man, Jn. 17: 5. If he remained unchanged in his divine form, and if he suffered in that which he took of earth, as you say, then tell me, beloved, what he had lost that he desired again to acquire of his Father? Examine the Scriptures rightly and pray, and by the grace of God, your eyes will be opened to behold the truth of Christ.

Again, in the second place we answer, that the whole Christ Jesus went forth from his Father, Jn. 1: 14; 3: 31; 6: 27; 8: 42; 14: 24; 16: 28; 17: 8; that the word of God became flesh in Mary, the Lord himself from heaven, 1 Cor. 15: 47; and that he was afflicted and oppressed in the flesh, soul and Spirit, according to the testimony of the Scriptures. In the flesh, because he was crucified. In his soul, because he himself says, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. In the Spirit, as he said Jn. 13: 21, *Turbatus est Jesus Spiritu*, "He was troubled in spirit." Which Christ Jesus (that he might be an offering unto God), suffered the judgment of the unrighteous; died according to the flesh, but was made alive according to the Spirit.

Again, in the third place we reply to your syllogisms, thus: The commandment was not given to the heavenly Christ, but to the earthly Adam and his seed, through Christ, that is, through the word. Adam, transgressing, was condemned to death through the Word Christ, Gen. 3: 19. As the righteousness of God is unchangeable and eternal, as you yourselves say, therefore disobedient Adam must die according to the immutable righteousness of God. As Adam was earthly and of earth, and was cursed by the word on account of his disobedience and had to die, therefore nothing could be expected nor taken from earth but earth, from curse nothing but curse, and from death nothing but death, as Paul plainly shows, Rom. 5: 12. Adam, being disobedient to the word which created him, in not giving heed to it, and eating what it had forbidden, had to die involuntarily the death, with his seed, which the word had promised him. Because it was for righteousness' sake that Adam and his descend-

ants had to die, he having sinned and not having wherewith to requite; therefore it is solely grace, mercy and love that he should live. But how? Through the righteousness of Adam's flesh? Not at all; but the word which had made Adam a living being, which gave him the commandment and promised him death, if he should commit iniquity, as was said above. This same word (as death had to be the consequence, according to righteousness, as truth had spoken) which God again promised to Adam, was to become flesh; that, as he was deceived by the liar, and therefore, according to the justice of God, had to die, he might again be delivered by the promised truth, and thus by grace and mercy alone, inherit life eternal. Adam believed it and was consoled, and as a sign of the truth of the promised favor and love, God made unto Adam and unto his consort, coats of skins and clothed them, Gen. 3: 21.

Thus has not the earthly, guilty, transgressing, accursed and mortal flesh of Adam requited the righteousness, and appeased his wrath, as you claim, but only the heavenly, innocent, obedient, blessed and quickening flesh of Christ, as the Scriptures testify; that he bare our sins, 1 Pet. 2: 24; Isa. 53: 8; by his wounds are we healed. For the promised Word, Christ Jesus, is become man and has fulfilled the righteousness required by the law, as Paul says, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. 8: 3, 4.

Hence it follows that all those who are born of Adam, and remain his in not receiving by faith the promised seed (I am speaking of those of understanding age), must, by the immutable righteousness of God, inherit the curse of Adam, that is, death, as a reward of sin. Christ himself says, "He that believeth not shall be damned," Mark 16: 16. Again, Paul says, "The wages of sin is death," Rom. 6: 23. For they have no communion of the most holy flesh and blood of Christ Jesus; nor can they ever enjoy his deliverance, kind-

ness, merits and blessing unless they be truly converted from the shameful darkness of unbelief and sin, to the eternal, clear, heavenly light, Christ Jesus, 1 Jn. 1:7. But those who, with Adam, truly receive the promised seed and thus become renewed and consoled in God, who are born anew by this same seed; who are changed or converted from the disobedient nature of Adam, into the obedient nature of the Word, Christ Jesus, these he calls flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone; he gives these unto himself, by mere grace, and makes them partakers of his righteousness, merits, cross, blood and bitter death, yea, his whole life, love and Spirit; for they are one body and one Spirit with him; so that they willingly fulfill, by this spirit of love which they have received of him, for God is love, all that which the merciful Father, by his saving truth, Christ Jesus has commanded as John testifies, saying, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight," 1 Jn. 3:22. Again, Paul says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law," Rom. 13:10. Again, Christ says, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me," Jn. 14:21.

Besides you say, What is born of the spirit is spirit. Just brethren, we do not say Christ is born of the Spirit, but we do say with the Scripture that he is incarnate and conceived by the Spirit. Now it is different as you know, to be born of the Spirit and to be incarnate and conceived by the Spirit. Who doubts, moreover, but that to be born of the Spirit is regeneration! I beseech you therefore, through the Lord as not being led rightly by the Scriptures, if you hold these things, you are ready to defend your cause. Herewith, beloved lords, friends and brethren, I conclude this my confession of the incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ. I write you this in accordance to your desire, and place it before you in all clearness, as one who is not ashamed

of his faith; although I do not thus deeply go into the matter in my admonitions to the brethren; but, alone, in an apostolic manner admonish them to regeneration and love. I desire, by the grace of the Lord, that you will rightly see into all things and rightly observe who have sinned. On the contrary, who has requited sin, that we may put on Adam and his descendants, their unrighteousness, darkness, sin and shame; and give to Christ Jesus his righteousness, brightness, praise and honor. Praying you, I say, not to follow in this and other matters, human wisdom, but the wisdom of God; not intelligence, but Scripture; not flesh, but Spirit; not the writings and opinions of the learned, but alone the testimony of Christ and his apostles, fearing God in purity of heart from your inmost souls, as I should, also myself, that we may not be like unto them who are ever learning and never come to the knowledge of the truth. Observe well that you do not otherwise ask, hear and answer, but by sincere zeal. Before God, faith and works avail. In all things be prepared to do the will of God and not the will of your idle, vain unwilling flesh.

I know there are many who are disposed to nothing but to search, inquire and dispute, and have never once confessed and received the most necessary things, without which none can be saved, namely, the piercing, regenerating and sanctifying faith, the urging fear of the Lord, and the burning love of God and their brethren. Be not like unto them. But, beloved brethren, seek and strive after true wisdom; open unto her; she stands before your door; behold her beauty; taste of her fruits; search her strength, and you will love, embrace and gladly receive her; your flesh will go under and the Spirit arise, and go before you in the word and truth of the Lord, until Adam dieth in you and Christ prevail. May God give us all his divine grace, Amen.

"Take ye heed, watch and pray," Mark 13:33.

AN ADMONISHING CONFESSION AND CLEAR DEMONSTRATION

TO THE LEARNED JOHN A'LASCO, ARCH-BISHOP AT EMDEN, EAST FRIESLAND, ALSO TO HIS
BRETHREN. HOW THE PREACHERS OF THE DIVINE WORD AND THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
SHOULD BE MINDED, ACCORDING TO THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

BELoved sirs, friends and brethren, as I have disclosed unto you, at your own request, the foundation of my faith and feelings concerning the very consoling incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, although I do not teach the same so deeply before the church, therefore I will now briefly point out my foundation and feeling how the teachers and church, who can rightly be called christians, should be affected and minded before God and before all the world, according to the showing of the Scriptures, so far as we can, by the grace of God, comprehend and understand it from his word; yet I will not dwell upon this matter long, lest I become tedious.

First, I would say in regard to the preachers and adduce this Scripture, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," Jn. 20: 21. Ever remain unchangeable in the church of God, thus: As all true teachers and preachers are sent of Christ Jesus, as he is sent of his Father, therefore we should rightly consider how and who this Christ Jesus was, how and what he taught when the Father sent him. He is doubtlessly the Son and image of God, the Teacher of righteousness who has taught and testified nothing but the truth, namely, the word of his Father. He taught it in the power of the Spirit and was urged by the Holy Ghost through an unquenchable fire of love to the service of all mankind. Besides, he was the burning, shining light of the world, the true pattern of all virtue who could truly say, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of

heart." Again, "For I have given you an example," &c., and therefore he gloried by the true testimony of his Holy Spirit, saying, "I am the good Shepherd," Jn. 18: 37; 7: 16; 1: 9; 3: 19; 8: 12; 12: 36; Matt. 11: 29; Jn. 13: 15; 10: 11.

This Christ Jesus, the Bishop of bishops, and the Shepherd of shepherds, who was faithful in all things unto which he was sent of his heavenly Father, never sends any other bishops, teachers, shepherds and laborers in his vineyard, to his members, children and sheep to care for them, to pasture and protect them, than those who are of one body, Spirit and mind with him, as he is one with his Father, who, by the divine Word, which is Christ, in him and in his heavenly nature, are so renewed, converted and changed that he may truly say of them, Behold, these are the children which God hath given me. Whosoever shall hear you shall hear me, as the Father testified of Christ, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him," Matt. 17: 5. Again, those who are of one spirit with Christ Jesus are members of his holy body, full of the love of God and of their brethren, who with Christ Jesus, their Bishop, seek nothing but the eternal gain, honor, glory and praise of God, and the inward conversion, regeneration and eternal salvation of those whose brotherly care is entrusted and commended to them of God. Yea, he sends such as are unblamable both in doctrine and life; as are urged by the Holy Spirit; who sincerely lament, with

Christ, about those who do not acknowledge the gracious time of their temptation, who are rejoiced, with all the angels of God, at the conversion of a sinner, who so thirst after the salvation of all mankind as a hungry person hungers after bread; who so apply the word and truth of the Lord that they dare not teach or practice a word otherwise than Christ Jesus himself has taught, practiced and commanded, namely, the pure, unadulterated, biblical word in the true sense and meaning of Christ and of his holy apostles; who practice the sacramental signs conformable to the gospel of Christ, namely, the baptism of the believing (and not of infants), and the Supper under both forms, in such church as is flesh of Christ's flesh and bone of his bone; such as are outwardly unblamable and inwardly of one heart, spirit, soul and body in Christ Jesus. Yea, he sends such whose doctrine is a salt; whose life is as a shining light, long suffering, meek, lowly, merciful, hospitable, not avaricious or selfish, not desirous of shameful gain, not puffed up, of good report among those of the world, ruling well his own house, having a well-minded consort, if they have the gift of cleanliness and obedient children. Yea, in all things chaste, sober, unblamable, having the Spirit, fear and love of God. Again, so minded in all things that they can truly say with Paul, to their entrusted sheep, "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ." "Be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in Spirit, in faith, in purity," Heb. 3: 2; Jn. 17: 11; Heb. 2: 13; Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 15; Eph. 5: 30; Matt. 5: 14; 1 Tim. 3: 2; Tit. 1: 6; 1 Cor. 4: 2; 11: 1; 1 Tim. 4: 12; Phil. 2: 17.

Behold, most beloved, thus the teachers should be minded who shall serve the Lord's church, that they may not hear from the obdurate and refractory: "Why do you teach others and not yourselves?" Nor can they otherwise teach to the glory of God; for the service of the New Testament is a service of the Spirit and not of the letter, 2 Cor. 3: 6. Therefore Christ never chooses as laborers in his vineyard, as servants and builders, such as are avaricious, drunkards and idlers, that the kingdom of God, which is spiritual, may be taught in purity of heart,

pasturing the sheep of Christ, not by force, but willingly, not being intent on shameful gain but on affection, not as those who seek dominion over others, but as examples to the flock of Christ, not serving for a certain benefice, pension, or stipulated salary as do your teachers, but, solely, for the gain of the souls which Christ Jesus has so dearly bought with his precious blood. Entrusting and commending to the God, who, by his grace, created, delivered, regenerated and sent them to his ministration, to the care of their temporal necessities of life, diligently feeding themselves, by the grace of the Lord, from their own or their rented lands, or from the labor of their hands, so far as is possible; that they do not sell the free word of God, given them without price, and thus live on shameful gain, robbery and theft. Let all sincere and pious servants of Christ beware of this, and whatever they cannot obtain by due prudence and diligence will doubtlessly be provided for them by the begotten brethren who fear the Lord, for whom they sow spiritual things; and not by inconvertible heathen, drunkards, usurers, whoremongers and such like. For such teachers are the oxen which tread out the corn, which should not be muzzled, 1 Cor. 9: 9; 1 Tim. 5: 18; Deut. 25: 4; they are those who are worthy of double honor, with whom all things should be shared, and who shall live by the gospel according to the Lord's own ordinance, as the priests under the law, lived by the altar; these are the true laborers worthy of their reward as Christ says; such teachers we shall acknowledge, honor, maintain in love, and for their labors' sake keep peace with them, as Paul teaches, "For they watch for your souls as they that must give account," Heb. 13: 17.

Behold most beloved sirs, friends and brethren, thus has God, the merciful Father, sent his blessed Son, who was in his own form, and minded like him in all things, namely, Christ Jesus, who has sent such as were of one spirit, soul and body with him, without a staff, purse, shoes, scabbard, money, gold and silver, that is, without all solicitude and avarice. The apostles ordained, at all places where they had begotten churches, such bishops and teachers

as were unblamable both in doctrine and in life, and have never mentioned annual incomes, benefices or rents. For they were men of God, servants of Christ, full of the love of God and their beloved brethren, who labored, taught, sought, pastured and watched through mere love, urged by the Spirit, not only for one, two or three hours a week, in the synagogue, but at all hours and places, in synagogues, streets, houses, mountains and fields. And, as they had received the knowledge of the kingdom of God, the truth, love and Spirit of God, without price, so they were, again, prepared to dispense it diligently and teach it without price, to their needy brethren; and, as for the temporal necessities of life, the begotten church was sufficiently urged by love, through the Spirit and word of God to give unto such faithful servants of Christ, and watchers of their souls, all the necessities of life, to assist them and provide for them all such things they could not obtain themselves. O, brethren, flee from avarice!

Again, those teachers did not go about offering their services, as these do, but they were called of God, as were Aaron, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Zechariah, Paul and others. Others, born of the unblamable church of Christ, were chosen by lot, as was Matthias Acts 1: 26. Being called, they were constrained by the Spirit, to teach, to admonish, to console, to reprove and to serve and protect their poor brethren and sisters according to God's holy word, with all their strength. As they were thus called, and felt in them an urging spirit and moved by love, as was said above, so they reasonably filled their office with all solicitude and diligence, watching night and day for the eternal salvation of their sheep, working diligently in the vineyard of the Lord, ruling the people of God with the rod of the Lord; they did not doubt, made use of no flattery; but in a good conscience they reprov'd the great as well as the small, the rich as well as the poor, the learned as well as those that were not learned; the word was proclaimed in their church, wholesome and unadulterated, at all times and in all places, as was said above, according to the measure of their faith and Spirit which God, by his grace, had given to every one of

them. Most beloved, do not excuse yourselves because all who boasted themselves as being teachers of the church of Christ, even in the times of Paul, were not sincere, pious, and urged by love, as appears from Phil. 1: 15; 2: 21; 3: 2. Verily, I say unto you, they boasted of being such, but in truth, before God they were not. For it is not hidden from you what kind of fruits they produced and how Paul regarded them. As you are aware that it is not the intention and will of God, nor ever shall be, that his holy word should be proclaimed to the erring world unto salvation, either by drunkards, whoremongers, avaricious, idolaters, despisers of the Scripture, gluttons, proud, thieves, bloodthirsty, vain talkers, enemies of the cross of Christ, by those whose belly is their God, by those who are already condemned by the word of God, or by the carnal or earthly-minded. But only, by the truly regenerated christian, unblamable men who sincerely seek God from their inmost souls, urged by the Holy Ghost and constrained by love, as Christ said thrice unto Peter, "Lovest thou me? Yea, Lord (answered Peter); thou knowest all things and knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my lambs," Jn. 21: 15.

O, most beloved, take heed what spirit urges you, what love constrains you, what church calls you and what things you seek. Follow the good and not the evil. I tell you in Christ Jesus that my soul is troubled for your sakes. I pray you, beloved brethren, receive it with a will. I must frankly speak my mind; for as much as I can deduce and understand from my past actions and from your apparent fruits, you are all, none of your teachers excepted, urged by your flesh and belly, and are therefore all hirelings and not shepherds, Jn. 10: 12. Or, at best, are such shepherds as seek the wool, milk and flesh and do not care for the Lord's sheep. For wherever the fattest are, there are also the best sheep. O brethren, consider what the Lord's prophets have so often threatened on such. Yea, how many are found among you who, for the sake of an earthen house, or for ten guilders, move from one place to another, as if they were not all bought equally dear at one price? I fear that you would all do it.

O brethren, if you confess this to be true then judge for yourselves what is your seeking, and if you will not verbally confess it, *superbia five pertinacia impediante*, it can yet not be denied by the intelligent. God has been mocked long enough. Brethren, be converted!

As the teachers are serving their bellies, avaricious, desirous of shameful gain, earthly-minded, as Paul says, not to say proud, lazy, vain, drunken, spiteful and envious, so are also minded, all these who are taught and begotten of them, as may be plainly seen, inasmuch as both teacher and church live and walk so shamefully that all heaven must be ashamed and astounded thereat. For their avarice, unchastity, pride, pomp, greed, drunkenness, hatred, envy, fornication, adultery, blood-thirstiness, usury, fraud, vanity, and all manner of shame have no limits or bonds. Moreover, we find open fencing-schools, gambling houses, houses of ill-fame and drinking houses. For as the teachers are, so are also their doctrine, sacraments and church, as is said, *Qualis Papa, tale Evangelium and omnia*. Verily, I say, believe it if you choose, Christ does not send such avaricious, selfish and carnal teachers, nor does he acknowledge such a self-conceited, carnal and blamable church. But those who are sent of Christ Jesus have his Spirit, crucify the lusts and desires of their flesh, that they, preaching to others may not be found shameful, seeking alone, the praise of God and the salvation of their beloved brethren, refusing all shameful gain, presents and gifts, so long as they have wherewith to maintain themselves, honoring none for the sake of gain, living unblamably, teaching the word wholesomely and using the sacraments according to the commandments of the Lord, excluding all degenerated sisters and brethren, again proclaiming grace to those that are converted, having eternal vigilance and care for those whose care is entrusted to them of the Lord's church.

As you are not such as the Scriptures require you to be, but are as yet in opposition to the true doctrine, and also, blamable in life, as is apparent, therefore I admonish you in all earnestness and fraternal love, to become first sincere christians be-

fore you undertake to impress and teach Christ unto others. Let us examine ourselves, that we may learn to know our own ailings, and knowing them, die unto them. For before God, neither smooth words nor semblance will avail. Brethren, I must tell you the plain truth which may be gall-ing and bitter to you because there is found neither Spirit nor power, nor trust in Christ, nor fear of God, nor love of the brethren with your teachers, but only a vain calling of words for the sake of a stipulated salary, without any show of christian fruits. Therefore all your calling is nothing but to sow on the shore to reap the wind; for the pure word of God and the teaching of the Holy Spirit cannot be pointed out and taught by servants who are unclean and carnal. To this all intelligent persons must, doubtlessly, consent.

As you then, I say, are blamable both in doctrine and in life, and as your doctrine, such as you have, is hired for a salary and without spiritual fruit, and as no unblamable church is begotten of you, and as the signs of the Word are abused by you; therefore it is apparent that you are not the true messengers of God, but you run your own course, urged by the flesh and not by the Spirit; not sincerely seeking the salvation of the church, but rather the temporal profits and rents, and that with such rapacity that you are not ashamed to receive them as a reward and price of your preaching, which were in ancient times, by feigned words and fraudulent commerce, as Peter says, nay, by nothing but theft and sly robbery, taken from the true and legal heirs.

Thus you sell, first, the precious, free word of God which, by grace, was given us of God, without price. And secondly, it is paid for by that which was stolen. Here lies hidden more than I will disclose. *Qui de furto vivit and rapina non dubium est, quim fur est and raptor*. Do look at the matter in a christian light. Behold, feel and taste your manifest error, unworthiness and plain avarice. I here speak of all your preachers; for they all enjoy such gain. Your teachings, benetices, pensions and rents are such an abomination before my eyes, that brethren, verily I would

rather be beheaded, burned, drowned or torn into quarters by four horses than to receive, on account of my preaching, such benefices, pensions or rents. Yea, when giving salaries to preachers was established, there surely crept into the church of Christ a very fearful, corrupting pestilence; which has corrupted so that, alas, there are scarcely any left who have retained the breath of Christ in them. To this you must all consent. What other reason is there than this that the preachers have sought the temporal gain of their own bellies more than the eternal gain of the souls of Christ? As you freely accept and enjoy the beforementioned shameful gain, and what is still worse, as you diligently seek and desire the same, how can you defend yourselves and say that you are not desirous of the filthy lucre? 1 Tim. 3: 3, and that you do not honor the person for filthy lucre's sake? O, brethren, I wish you would awaken, to consider the matter, and that you were all of one mind with us in this matter; for it would doubtlessly be profitable to both the praise and truth of God, and to your poor souls, that we would without pay, dispense the precious word of God, the word of eternal salvation and heavenly grace, which can be merited by no works nor requited by money, as we, by grace only, received it of God without price, that we again would dispense it without pay, and solely by brotherly love would teach it to the hungering consciences, God surely would not forsake us, but would in every emergency paternally care for us and protect us. But it can not thus be with you because you are devoid of faith and love.

As you are all buried to your ears in filthy lucre; earthly and carnally minded in all things; not yet dead unto the flesh by the power of regeneration, not yet received Christ Jesus in all his words, and on that account, are not yet wholesome in doctrine, do not conform the ministration of the signs to the word of God; are blamable in doctrine, as is plain, and as there is found with you no power, no fruit of the Spirit, no true fear of God and no brotherly love; but rather heresy, upbraiding, blasphemy and profaning of the teachings and lives of the pious saints and children

of God, who for the testimony of their consciences, confirmed by the word of God, have fled from their country and kindred, and for the sake of the testimony are prepared for water, fire and sword if God so will. Besides, your doctrine being quite powerless and fruitless, the church which you beget being quite earthly, carnal and contrary to the testimony and fruits of the holy word of the Lord; therefore, we repeat it that you are not the true messengers of Jesus Christ. Be not angry with me, most beloved.

It is for the beforementioned reasons that we will not hear nor attend your preaching, nor partake of your supper. For we shall never desire to enter into your church and to become one body with you until you sincerely repent and embrace a free, christian doctrine, not hired nor sold out, but solely urged by the Holy Spirit through brotherly love, a true use of the sacramental signs, according to the command, doctrine and usage of Christ and his apostles, and an unblamable life and walk, led in the love and fear of the Lord. If we do so before these are found with you, we are sure that we sin against God and his holy word, from which may the kind, merciful Father save us. For before God, it does not become us to commit ourselves to such doctrine, admonition and church, who first, err in doctrine, and secondly, do not in the least show by their lives that they are the truly regenerated children of God, or the true church of Jesus Christ. But most beloved, it behooves you, as you have not the unblamable doctrine and walk of Jesus Christ, to renounce your doctrine and life and voluntarily bid adieu to all the lusts of the flesh, to seek the kingdom of God in sincerity of heart, to enter with us, into all obedience to our beloved Lord Jesus Christ with all your strength, if you do not desire to err willfully, that we together, may become the holy, christian and unblamable church, godly, holy, clean, obedient unto God, serving all mankind, powerful in truth, shining forth in righteousness, dead unto sin, living by the Spirit, nay, in all things christian, heavenly and unblamable in Christ Jesus.

Do receive my admonishing confession,

in good faith, and do not understand it as too far-reaching, namely, such words as, *clean, unblamable*, and the like. For they are spoken of Christ Jesus himself, and of his holy apostles to the church of the Lord, Jn. 13: 10; Phil. 2: 15. Do not understand it, most beloved, that we deem ourselves so clean and unblamable as being without sin. Not at all, dear brethren; for I know full well that holy John teaches, saying, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," 1 Jn. 1: 8. Again, James says, *In multis enim labimur omnes*. "In many things we offend all," Jas. 3: 2. Yea, beloved brethren, with Paul, I find the disposition to commit sin, at all times, so strong in my flesh, that I often think recklessly, speak inconsiderately and "the evil which I would not, that I do," Rom. 7: 8, 19.

But the abominable, shameful sins and offenses, such as adultery, fornication, hatred, envy, inebriety, pomp, splendor, cursing, swearing, gambling, desire of filthy lucre, abuse of the ordinances of Christ and fraud I verily, detest from the inmost of my heart, and they should never, by the grace of the Lord, be practiced by any sincere, godfearing christians, inasmuch as they hate and oppose them; for the spirit which is in them is a deadly enemy to all ungodliness, wickedness and sin (in the mean while we often find that we are born of Adam). Besides, their spirit strives and hungers after the truth, righteousness, will and commandments of God, yet in great weakness; for they are very much retarded in the works, fruits, and fulfillment by the heavy burden of the sinful flesh. Nevertheless, because the good Spirit of God abides in them, they do not cease to fight their tardy flesh. For the life of true christians is nothing but a continual combat upon earth. Whosoever shall valiantly battle and overcome, will be clothed in white raiments, and fed with the heavenly bread of the tree of life, Rev. 2: 17.

Behold, most beloved, inasmuch as you and your church have never triumphed in this battle (I judge from what I hear, and from your actions which I see), but still serve the world, the flesh and the devil carelessly; therefore we deem, according to

the testimony of the Scripture, that you vainly and wrongfully boast of the name, grace, deliverance, merits, death, blood, and promises of Christ; as you have not his word, and by the word, his faith, Spirit, fear and love, and consequently do not follow them.

Therefore, I pray you by the mercy of the Lord, to consider once, what kind of teachers you are, what kind of spirit urges you, what kind of love prompts you, with what intentions and by what motives you teach, what kind of fruits you produce, what kind of ordinances you use, and unto what kind of a church you teach and minister. Judge all things according to the divine testimony, without self-love, flesh and partiality. I doubt not but if you examine the matter rightly, you will not be surprised that we will not hear your doctrine, nor use your sacraments, and refuse unto death to become members of your church. For this remains incontrovertible, eternally unchangeable; that as Christ Jesus is of one mind with the Father, and sent of him, so all teachers should be of one mind with Christ Jesus who can be considered as sent of him. Those who are one with Christ in Spirit, love and life; who teach that which was commanded by Christ, such as repentance and the peaceable gospel of grace, which he himself received of God, and taught to the world, all those who hear, believe, keep and fulfill the same in true fear, are the church of Christ, the truly believing, christian church, the body and bride of Christ, the ark of the Lord, the mount and paradise, the house, people, city and temple of God, the spiritual Eve, flesh of Christ's flesh and bone of his bone, children of God, the chosen generation, the spiritual seed of Abraham, children of the promise, branches and trees of righteousness, sheep of the heavenly pasture, kings and priests, a holy begotten people which is God's own. Besides, they are chosen to proclaim the power of him who has called them from darkness into his marvelous light, Col. 1: 14; 1 Cor. 12: 27; Heb. 12: 22; Matt. 5: 14; 2 Cor. 6: 16; 11: 5; Eph. 5: 30; 1 Pet. 2: 9; Rom. 9: 8; Isa. 61: 3; Ps. 95: 7; 79: 13; Rev. 1: 6; 1 Pet. 2: 9.

All those who have not the Spirit, love and life of Christ, nor sincerely desire them,

have no share in the glorious Jerusalem of God, that is, in Christ's church; no matter whether they be teacher or disciple, prince or subject, man or woman; besides they have neither prayer, nor God, nor Christ, nor promise, nor remission of sins, nor any sure consolation in eternal life, so long as they do not sincerely repent, receive God's word, and fulfill it in the true fear, as Christ himself says, "He that believeth not is already condemned," Jn. 3: 18.

Dear brethren, you may contradict this as much as you will, yet this foundation shall stand forever, and will never be changed. The words of Paul shall never be broken, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. 8: 9; and where the Spirit is there shall also be the fruits of the Spirit, as it is infallible that if the Spirit is in man, the evil one as well as the good, it will manifest itself by its fruits, Gal. 5: 16; Matt. 7: 17.

Lastly, most beloved, if you want to be the true church of Christ and boast of the truth, grace, word, Spirit, and blood of the Lord, then separate, first, all your preachers who are urged by the unclean spirit and flesh, who, therefore are not of the church of Christ, namely, all those who are desirous of filthy lucre, as was said above. Again, also, all drunkards, wranglers, flatterers, proud, envious and avaricious; for all these testify by their fruits that they have not the Spirit of Christ. And if they have not the Spirit of Christ, how can these poor, miserable men, then, teach and impress the Spirit, power and will of God, the word of grace, and the word of eternal life, which they do not confess? Yea, brethren, it is impossible for me to teach the things which I do not know myself, and how shall I serve in the house of the Lord while I myself am a castaway? Judge for yourselves.

Secondly, cleanse your church, also. Exclude, according to the word of God, all adulterers and fornicators, drunkards, slanderers, swearers, those who lead a shameful and inordinate life, the proud, avaricious, idolatrous, disobedient unto God, whoremongers and the like, that you may become the holy, christian church which is without spot or blemish, which is as a city built upon a rock. In case these are truly

observed and found with you, and, besides, a free, christian doctrine, the true ministration of the sacraments of Christ, not according to the opinion of men or of the learned, but according to the true doctrine of Christ and his apostles—again, the fear and love of God, and an unblamable life, according to God's word, then you will ever have us as your brethren; for it is such we seek. But if you remain as you are, then I say publicly, Better to die than to enter into your doctrine, sacraments, life, and church, as was said above.

Beloved brethren, it is no use to allege the Scripture of the Pharisees sitting in the seat of Moses, Matt. 23: 2; nor that Herod sent the wise of the east; nor that some say, If the devil should preach the word of God, why not hear it? Christ Jesus did not send the Pharisees, the servants of the letter, to preach the word of the Spirit and of life; Herod did not send the wise, with good intentions; nor has the devil ever sincerely given praise to God; nor does God want the praise of the devil, for Christ says, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him," Luke 4: 35; therefore it is useless to adduce such reasons, inasmuch as God, by his mercy and grace, has so opened the eyes of our mind that we surely know that the spiritual service of the New Testament can be administered by none but by servants of the Spirit impelled in love by the power of the Holy Ghost; for it is and remains a service of the Spirit and not of the letter, 2 Cor. 3: 6. Enough has been adduced on this.

In short, deny yourselves, be prepared to do the will of God, seek nothing but his honor and praise, and the eternal salvation of your brethren, and hunger and thirst after the righteousness of God. Believe and receive Christ Jesus rightly in his blessed word, and you will undoubtedly understand and comprehend the true way, the truth, and life eternal, to the praise of God, and to your own salvation. May God, the kind and merciful Father, grant us all this, Amen, Matt. 5: 6; Jer. 31: 25.

As I, dear brethren, have diligently re-proved the preachers, on account of the receiving of filthy lucre, in this my admonishing confession, according to the word of God, therefore I do not doubt but that there

are some who will bitterly contradict me in this matter, and say, "Beloved Menno, you can not deprive us of the privileges Christ Jesus has given us; as you have alleged from Paul, that those who serve the gospel shall live by the gospel. Say why seek you to take away that of which we have the privilege?" To those who contradict me thus, I would first reply by asking, If the teachers, to whom this privilege is given of Christ by the gospel, are not sent of Christ Jesus? They must answer in the affirmative. Then I say again, as *they* are sent of Christ, who enjoyed this privilege given of Christ, therefore those have not this privilege, who run their own course and are not sent of Christ.

Again, I ask if these teachers to whom this privilege is given by the Scriptures, were not men of the Spirit of love and of truth? Doubtlessly so. Then I reply: If they are men of Spirit, of love and of truth, to whom this privilege is granted by the gospel, those who do not teach and serve by the Spirit, love and truth, may not appropriate and make use of this privilege; for they are not the teachers to whom it was given and promised by the word of God.

Thirdly, I ask, if the teachers which are sent of Christ Jesus, who, according to the Scriptures may enjoy this privilege, led a shameful life after their being called? and if they led a shameful life, and were found corrupt before God and his church, if they could longer remain as teachers in the unblamable church of Christ? They must doubtlessly answer, No. Then, if they answer, no, as it is in truth, that those whose life and walk in the church of Christ, are no more pure and useful than the filthy carrion by the roadside, are no teachers in the church of the Lord; such as drunkards, perjurers, those filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, deceit, debate and malignity. For if the salt have lost his savor, says Christ, it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men, Matt. 5: 13; 1 Cor. 5: 10; 2 Cor. 6: 10; Rom. 1: 29. And if the church is to be unblamable, and without spot or blemish, how much more so the

teachers, as Christ himself teaches, saying, Ye are the light of the world. Ye are the salt of the earth, Eph. 5: 30; Matt 5: 13. Inasmuch as the beforementioned, carnal teachers are already excluded from, and deprived of the christian office of teacher, by God's own ordinance and word, as they do not live up to the doctrine, and by their apparent unbelief and inordinacy are not in the church of Christ; therefore they can not enjoy that privilege; for Christ Jesus has promised and given sincere, pious, spiritual, meek, true, unblamable teachers, sent of God, and not inordinate, lazy, vain, idle, drunken, shameful, lying, pompous, gluttonous, avaricious and carnal rogues, Rom. 10: 16; Isa. 51: 7; 62: 6.

Fourthly, I ask, whether the men of God, the prophets, apostles, and teachers sent of God, were also hired or bought at a stipulated, annual salary, to teach and proclaim the free word of grace? I know that the answer must be, no. For they did not teach but by the urging of the Spirit and love. I say again, Inasmuch as your preachers are hired and bought at a stipulated salary or rents, and do not preach unless they are hired, they must acknowledge that they are hirelings, and not teachers that are sent; for they do not teach by the urging of the Spirit and love, but are enticed and drawn on as was Balaam by the promised salary, benefices and rents. *Qui id negat, Solem in die splendere minus concedet.*

Fifthly, I ask, if the teachers, sent of God, men of the Spirit, of love and of truth, enlightening both in doctrine and in life, lived of a stipulated salary, benefice or rents; or whether they did not live by the services or assistance of the brethren, so far as they could not obtain it of themselves? They must confess that it was by the assistance of the brethren, and not of certain benefices, pensions or rents. This I teach, seek and sincerely desire. Therefore this is my brief conclusion and christian admonition to all preachers and teachers. Brethren, humble yourselves and become unblamable disciples, that you may hereafter become called teachers. Try your Spirit, love and life before you commence to pasture and to teach. Run not your own course, but wait until you are called of the Lord's church; I say,

Lord's church, of the Spirit of God, and are constrained by urging love. If this is the case, brethren, then pasture diligently, preach and teach valiantly, cast from you all filthy lucre and booty; rent lands, milk cows, learn a trade, if possible, do manual labor, as did Paul, and all that which you then fall short of will doubtlessly be given and provided you by the pious brethren, by the grace of God. Understand it not as 'superfluously,' but as 'necessarily.'

Such privileges the holy gospel grants to the unblamable preachers which are sent of Christ Jesus, and nothing further. But the preachers who run their own course, are earthly and carnally minded, are blamable in doctrine and in life, "serve not our Lord

Jesus Christ, but their own bellies," who, on account of their lazy, gluttonous, easy flesh, teach and serve to please the world, as hired servants, at certain wages, the Scriptures do not know. Therefore I say for once and for all time, If they will not do differently, but always say in their hearts—*Erret quilibet homo ad libitum, nihil ad nos, modo ventri nostro provisum fuerit*—then I will leave them in the hands of him who shall judge them and us according to his most holy word and to his pleasure.

Brethren, decide the more wisely, and living in the great God through all things, refuse not to bid adieu to your carnal bodies.

CONCLUSION.

HERE you have, beloved sirs, friends, and brethren, our plain confession of the incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, which I thus sincerely confess and believe; for you requested me to do so, and, I trust, with a good intention. Therefore I have not hidden my faith. Now, judge the matter rightly, if you be spiritually minded, and if I should, as you think I do, err as is natural to man, which I trust I do not, then do not think that I do so out of obduracy, or partiality, but before God, my Creator, it is because I know no better but that it is the firm, immutable foundation of God's word and truth. Brethren, do not look at me as one who seeks something contrary to the will of God. Not at all. The eternal truth, word and will of God, I am prepared to do, at the risk of all that his paternal kindness may inflict upon me. This I say in sincerity of heart, and have no doubt. Therefore I say to you, that if you have any plainer Scriptures in support of this article of the incarnation of Christ; if you have a clearer foundation, truth, or clearer proof than we have, then assist us. I will, by the grace of the Lord, change my heart in regard to this matter, and follow your doctrine. But, above all, brethren, I want you to understand that I will not accept

nor listen to human doctrines, nor cleverness, nor garbling of the Scriptures, nor flatterings, nor presumption, in regard to this but solely to the plain Scriptures, truth and immutable testimony; as we have presented to you, in this matter of our confession, nothing but scriptural truth and immutable testimony. But if you cannot advance such, then give heed, keep your peace and leave us our faith in peace; for, most beloved brethren, before God, I seek nothing but the pure, unadulterated word of God and its testimony.

Besides, I have here presented to you, how and in what manner I admonish and teach the open hearted brethren; with which doctrine no godfearing consciences can be afflicted, nor christian souls be deceived. I pray and desire you to do likewise, that you may build and not break. Brethren, if you do not then take heed how and what you teach, I can beseech and admonish you in love, but it behooves me not to force you, even if I could. Every person shall have to render an account of his teaching and doing, before God and not before men.

In the third place you have my admonishing confession how both teacher and church should be minded according to the Scriptures. Again, I pray and desire by the

mercy of the Lord, that you will not accept this scriptural truth in bitterness; for that which I have written is the unchangeable word and will of God, and will remain so forever. Therefore take heed that you do not be angry with me on account of my writing, because it is contrary to your flesh. It verily is not mine, but the doctrine of Christ; not my will, but the will of Christ. If you be angry, you are not angry with me, but with Christ, who has thus taught and instructed us in his holy gospel or word. And in case you fear God, you will doubtlessly love me the more, because I, by the grace, Spirit and word of God, as far as he bestows on me, open unto you the kingdom of heaven, and show you the right way. Yea, because I, fearlessly, and in true brotherly love, of which God is my witness, speak unto you and point you to the eternal, immutable truth; because I cut the cankering flesh from your wounds, and do not flatter you; for I seek not your carnal, but your spiritual friendship; not *your* praise, but the praise of God; not your goods and gifts, but your salvation and souls. For these reasons I tell you the pure truth of God, and do not spare you. O, brethren, receive it in gladness of heart. It is the only word and will of Christ. If you reject it, you do not reject me, but Christ Jesus who has so dearly bought us all. Therefore take heed to awaken yet to-day, and no longer wander and proceed in darkness and deadly blindness. And let the poor, ignorant people, the poor, innocent souls, no longer err under your name and cover. The whole, wide world depends upon you learned. As you pipe, so they dance; as you teach, so they believe; and as you proceed, so they follow. Therefore, woe unto you if you teach wrongly; if you destroy and do not gather; if you deceive and do not pasture; if you corrupt and do not convert.

Receive eyes of wisdom, that you may rightly teach and lead others, according to the will of God; and that the word which Christ spoke be not applicable to you, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch," Matt. 15:14. Lastly, I shall soon send you, if God please, my treatise on the baptism of the believing, with other

doctrines, from which you may clearly learn my foundation, doctrine, seeking and intentions; why I labor, after what I strive, and by what Scriptures and for what reasons we assert the baptism of the believing; and for what reasons we deem and consider infant baptism as vain, idolatrous and contrary to the word.

Read it all in sincerity of heart, ponder upon it, follow alone the true sense of the divine Spirit and truth. Let opinions go, let flesh and adroitness be destroyed. Many have been deceived thereby. This our doctrine concerning the preachers, concerning the unblamableness of the church, concerning the baptism of the believing, concerning the Supper of an unblamable assembly, and concerning the separation of the penitent, is, doubtlessly, the eternal, immutable word, will and ordinance of God; therefore, by the grace of the Lord, we will never be reasoned out of it by human wisdom, cleverness, threats nor tyranny. Yea, at all times I am prepared to testify and assert this doctrine before God and my brethren, with the sure testimony of my conscience, at the cost of all anxiety, persecution, blood and death. Let the merciful, kind Father treat me and all those who sincerely seek and fear him, according to his divine, blessed will. Read it discreetly and judge it in a christian way.

This is briefly my foundation and conviction of the articles of the christian church; that before God neither baptism, nor Supper, nor any other outward ordinances avail if partaken without Spirit and the new creature. But before God, only faith, love, Spirit, the new creature or regeneration avail, as Paul plainly shows, Gal. 5:6. All those who, by the grace of God receive these from above, suffer themselves to be baptized according to the commandment of the Lord, and rightly partake of his Supper, Acts 2:38; 9:19; 8:38; Matt. 28:19.

Yea, they with ardent desire commit themselves to the ordinance and doctrine of Jesus Christ, and shall nevermore willfully oppose the holy will, and plain testimony of God. For this reason I amicably beseech you, most beloved, from my inmost heart, not to dispute with me, nor any oth-

er person concerning any outward articles and literal ordinances; but first conquer and subject yourselves; that is, your unbelieving, miserable, refractory, obdurate flesh which yet keeps and hinders you from the truth, faith, knowledge, righteousness and obedience of God. Yea, doubtlessly, if that is rightly vanquished, you will see into all of the ordinances of God, confess and practice them. But as long as it lives in you and has its sway, you will dispute and oppose, and nevermore comprehend, understand and follow the immutable foundation of eternal truth. Beware.

No more at present. But rightly compare Christ with yourselves; his love and

Spirit, with your love and spirit; his seeking, doctrine, sacraments and life, with your seeking, doctrine, sacraments and life; and you will, no doubt, find wherein you fall short.

May God, the merciful Father, grant unto you and to us all, true wisdom, understanding, faith, knowledge and true judgment; an ardent heart, true fear, love, doctrine, life, sacraments and ordinances, through Christ Jesus, our Savior and eternal Deliverer of the world, Amen.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate," Matt. 7: 13.

Amara est veritas, and qui eam prædicant repletus amaritudine, dicit Hieronymus.

